Among the eight subsidiary companies of CIL, three subsidiary companies namely, ECL, Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) and Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) have been incurring losses. The Board of Directors of CIL have decided to engage M/s ICICI and Industrial Development Bank of India for formulation of the revival plans of BCCL and CCL respectively. The loss making mines of ECL, BCCL and CCL cannot be converted into profit making mines without a reasonable extent of downsizing the manpower engaged in such mines.

Productivity of North-East Coal Fields Ltd.

1458. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for gradual fall of productivity of North-Eastern Coal Fields Ltd. since 1998, indicating the annual production level;

(b) whether there has been a move to shift the Headquarters of NE coal fields from Guwahati to Calcutta;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the motive behind deserting the offices of NECCIL by gradual shifting of officers; and

(e) the prospective plan, if any, for improvement of NECCIL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) The major reasons for low production and low productivity in NEC are as follows:—

(i) Lack of demand.

(ii) Inadequate rail infrastructure facility,

(iii) Difficult geo-mining conditions,

(iv) Unviable economics of mining.

(v) High sulphur contents in Coal.

Because of very high production cost, further expansion of NEC operations would result in piling of stock at the pit head, which get deteriorated in quality. Even at the present level of coal production,

the pit head stocks continue to be more than the annual production. Positions for the years 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under:—

Year	Production tonnes)	Output per (in lakh Manshift (OMS)	Stock as at end of the year (in lakh tonnes)
1997-98	6.87	0.77	9.27
1998-99	6.37	0.67	8.43

(b) No Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) There is no motive of the management to desert the NEC offices. Only three executives have been transferred from Guwahati office during the year 1999 purely on their own request and also considering their long stay. In place of the general manager, so transferred, immediate replacement was provided at Guwahati to head the office.

(e) It may not be economically profitable for CIL to enhance the production in NEC at present. However, efforts continue to be made to improve the marketing opportunities, besides attempting cost control and manpower reduction.

Caving in of coal mines in Bihar

1459. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the coal mines in Bihar which have caved in during the last two years;

(b) what has been the loss of men and material in such mishaps;

(c) what action has been taken against the persons responsible for negligence; and

(d) what measures have been taken to prevent these cases of subsidence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (PROF. RITA VERMA): (a) and (b) There have been only three incidents of caving-in of mines in the state of Bihar